



# Recycle This! Newsletter

*Newsletter of the Maine State Planning Office, Waste Management & Recycling Program \* December 2005*

## **Solid Waste Policy Review Task Force**

As part of the process in preparing to update Maine's Waste Management and Recycling Plan, SPO convened a Task Force to Review Solid Waste Management Policy. Three meetings were held this fall in Augusta, where nearly 40 people participated in discussions on policy issues such as: the hierarchy; the ban on new commercial disposal facilities; out of state waste; and other topics. Efforts were made to not only talk about current issues but issues that may be before us in 5, 10 or even 50 years. Representation on the Task Force included: municipal officers and program managers; facility operators; commercial reuse and recycling operations professionals; members of environmental and local groups; state officials and members of the public.

The Task Force will meet again in late winter to review a draft report of their deliberations and SPO recommendations. Following that meeting, SPO will present the final report to the Governor and the Legislature's Natural Resource Committee.

## ***Maine Recycles Week 2005 Winners***

Each of us who recycle are winners and help everyone to benefit; however once a year to raise the level of awareness of the public toward recycling, the Maine Recycles Week Steering Committee sponsors school competition and a statewide poster competition.

Of the participating schools, \$500 each was awarded to: Ft. Fairfield Elementary School, Ft. Fairfield; Zippel Elementary School, Presque Isle; and St. George Elementary School, Tenants Harbor. Runners up schools, Bowdoinham Community School and Bath Middle School each received a \$200 award.

The winning poster this year, which adorns the Maine Recycles 2006 calendar and next year's Maine Recycles Week poster, was drawn by Danny Mears of South Bristol.

## ***SPO Co-sponsors Medication Collection***

On November 2, Mid Coast Hospital in Brunswick hosted Maine's first regionally-organized collection of unused, unwanted, or outdated medications. The event was spectacularly successful. In just over four hours, over 1,200 pill bottles were collected containing over 47,000 doses from more than 120 participants from as far away as Waldoboro.

The improper disposal of medications causes harm to the environment and storage poses a threat to the health and well being of children and the elderly.

A broad coalition of public agencies included: Brunswick and Bath police departments, Sagadahoc County Sheriff's Department and Emergency Management Agency, Sagadahoc Health Improvement Project, Mid Coast Hospital, Merrymeeting Bay TRIAD, Maine departments of Health and Human Services (Public Health Nursing) and Environmental Protection, and State Planning Office. The SPO provided funds that went towards a very well-published public awareness campaign and the environmentally sound disposal of the unwanted medications.

At a follow-up meeting in December, volunteers committed to put together a report to aid others in replicating the event around the state and also to tentative plans to another event in the Mid-coast in the summer of 2006.

On **January 18, 2006**, manufacturers will begin paying for the transportation and recycling of e-waste from State approved consolidators.

Beginning **July 20, 2006**, the disposal of TVs and computer monitors is prohibited in Maine.

Municipality responsibility brochure online at: [www.recyclemaine.com](http://www.recyclemaine.com)



## Thank You for Your Response!



In preparation for the convening of the Solid Waste Task Force, State Planning Office staff took to the road to interview the operators of facilities across the State. In the last issue of the “Recycle This! Newsletter”, it was thought to be a good idea to re-

quest input as to the condition of activities and facilities and to even ask the pointed question: How can the State of Maine reach its 50% recycling goal? While the task force tackles its challenge to analyze the state of the State and to set a course for the future, we can report on the comments received in response to recycling.

To some, a decade ago, it was important to have local control of recycling and solid waste services. The choice of strategies and management was important as the handling of waste was realized not only as a service but also a business. When this question was asked here, there did appear a thread of consistency throughout several regions with the suggestion to have the State take the initiative and make recycling, and maybe even pay-per-bag and composting, mandatory.

On the practical side, some asked for the State to do more to help find markets for materials, as well as help increase the number of materials acceptable for recycling. While no suggestion was given as to how to do it, someone also asked the State to help to make recycling “user-friendly” (Perhaps they were recognizing that recycling is most successful when it is “easy” or readily available). A role for the State was also seen in promoting cooperation among towns. One innovative suggestion was to look to the State to provide regional storage for materials while waiting for transportation.

Finally, it was repeated constantly that there was a need locally and on the state level to help get the word out. Education and communication were recognized at the outset as integral parts to the recycling process, and perhaps in the coming decade we need to be told how to use the systems. “Education – Education – Education.”

We do thank you for your input and welcome comments at any time. Please visit us at [www.recyclemaine.com](http://www.recyclemaine.com).

## EPA Helps to Explain

### Greenhouse Gases in Recycling

With the rising price of gasoline and heating oil, environmental contributions made by recyclers and the Recycling Industry may have taken a back seat. Even within the Recycling Industry, discussion has turned more to transportation and the impact of the increases in transportation fuels. EPA has recently made a connection between recycling and energy conservation that may be of interest to some though.

A white paper at the EPA climate and waste website discusses the energy benefits of recycling and lists energy factors for most commodity types. It also quantifies the energy savings reaped nationally from recycling programs right now. These revised energy factors have been incorporated into all of their climate and waste calculation tools. The energy paper, “Energy Impacts of Waste Management”, is on the global warming waste site at:

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/OAR/globalwarming.nsf/content/ActionsWasteToolsReports.html>

These tools can help to quantify the environmental benefits (energy and green house gas reductions) from improved materials management: WARM (to calculate energy and ghg implications of waste management options), ReCON (calculates energy and ghg benefits of recycled content manufacturing or purchasing), and Durable Goods Calculator (estimates benefits of recycling 14 different types of durable goods).

We need to actively argue the benefits of our recycling efforts as they have a positive impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**Correction:** In the last newsletter, under the ‘Legislative Up-Date’, the summary for LD 1076, “Resolve, to Recognize Alton as a Host Community with Regard to the West Old Town Landfill” was incorrect. We apologize for this error.

This was the amended Resolve, signed by the Governor: Resolved: That the Department of Environmental Protection shall grant the Town of Alton automatic intervenor status if the Executive Department, State Planning Office files for an expansion permit related to the West Old Town Landfill and if the Town of Alton requests automatic intervenor status.

# Municipal Data Comes Together

## Recycling Data Surrounds Everyone



Looking into a crystal ball, turning over a few fortuneteller cards, peering into the depths of a cup to read tea leaves, among other diversions has entertained people for years, revealed the past, present and future, and for some has set direction or the basis for personal decision-making. When the responsibility for planning or assisting planning for

communities, counties, the state or regions is at question, hopefully decisions are founded in more concrete data and information. Recognized for its importance by the public and the law makers, the State Planning Office is directed by Maine Statutes, 38 MRSA § 2133, to collect annual data from Maine's municipalities to determine the characteristics of our waste disposal routine.

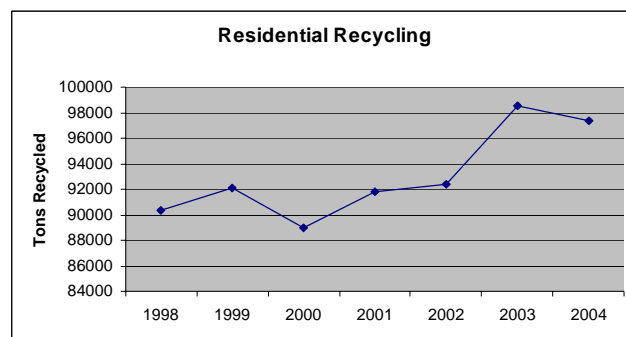
When one looks at the latest figures for what our citizens do, a decrease in the per person generation of waste in Maine this past year over 2003 is seen (.7395 tons per person as compared to .7530 tons per person). We may ask: "Is this due to tourism being down in 2004 due to a wet summer compared to 2003, or what has influenced our behavior?" The data becomes more valuable when we analyze our individual communities or activities within our communities.

Trends are determined by longer streams of information, which due to cooperation, diligence and persistence are becoming more available. This year the State Planning office celebrates hosting waste management policy and education for its 10<sup>th</sup> year and the strength of many solid years of data collection.

## Waste Data Concerns Each of Us

Before any analysis of recycling data is done, those responsible for its collection insist on the highest possible return and quality of requests for information. For any report, it is especially important to have in hand the major municipalities and regional entities - which in itself means that it is as important to have as close to everyone reporting as it is to have recycling available to as close to everyone in the state. In part due to the diligence and commitment of our communities, the State can claim recycling services being available to about 99% of the population.

Total tons of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) reported being managed by municipal programs in 2004 was 1,118,391.86 tons. Of this figure, 340,460.05 tons were recycled (30.44%). (These numbers do not include all of the MSW generated in Maine in 2004.)



Residential recycling efforts were calculated to be 97,340.66 tons, which was the second strong year in a row for our communities. The 2004 figures revealed that corrugated cardboard and newspapers are the leading materials at 27,103 tons and 26,869 tons respectively. Mixed paper and metal are closely recognized to each other but at less than half the tonnage of the leaders at 11,779 tons and 10,702 tons.

### ***How Do We Improve and Where Do We Go from Here?***

**Click Here to View Your Community's Data History**

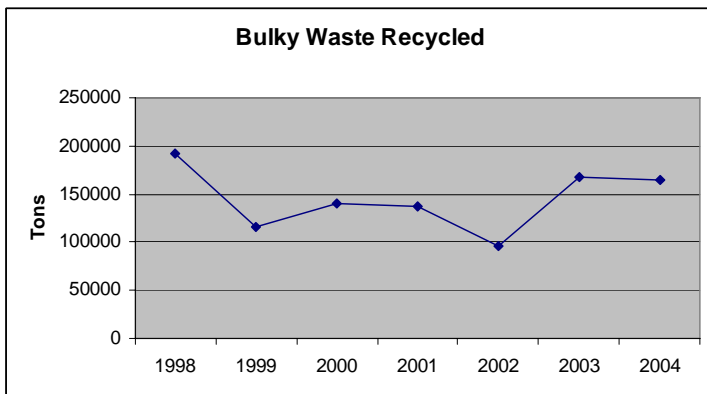
**(This is the same page where municipalities file annual reports online.)**

<http://www.state.me.us/spo/recycle/municipaldata/>

This link can be helpful to community officials, planners, operators, teachers, students, and citizens.

## Electronic copies can save resources (money, time, and materials).

Bulky waste recycled was reported at 164,696.72 tons in 2004. Commonly identified as that waste which naturally does not fit in a 30 gallon trash container, the quantity of bulky waste has fluctuated over the last five years.



Again this year, the reports to the State inquired of the communities what their solid waste and recycling expenses were. For the 315 reporting municipalities/regions, those expenses that were identified totaled nearly \$88 million in 2004.

Recycling responsibilities were among some of the first services in the State to be accepted in many regional efforts. In 2004, more than 43% of the State's population recycled through 169 regional facilities that served 357 municipalities. In 209 municipalities and regions that include 431 municipalities, residents have the option of hiring a private hauler or taking their recyclables to the transfer station themselves.

### Help Us Reduce Costs and Waste!

*The goal is 50%.*

*If you have Internet access, you can help SPO save money and paper by signing up to receive this newsletter electronically. During the course of this coming year, the SPO would like to move toward distributing and collecting as much as possible electronically. We wish to enlarge the electronic mailing list for this newsletter.*

Please contact Rhonda Cartlidge at [rhonda.cartlidge@maine.gov](mailto:rhonda.cartlidge@maine.gov) or 1-800-662-4545 to jump on the band wagon.

## FAQs of the SPO Recycling Program

### How many communities have curbside trash collection?

There were 14 municipalities that provided their own curbside collection in 2004. These communities account for about 16% of the population.

In addition to these communities providing the total service, another 146 municipalities contract out to private companies to provide services to approximately another 39% of the population.

### How many municipalities have Pay-As-You-Throw or Pay-Per-Bag services?

The 2004 reports identify 127 municipalities in 71 municipal or regional organizations. This affects approximately one quarter of the population.

Generally, the next question asked is does PAYT or PPB help recycling?

It is generally shown that having the public pay for the disposal of their MSW is a positive incentive to recycle.

### How many communities have mandatory recycling?

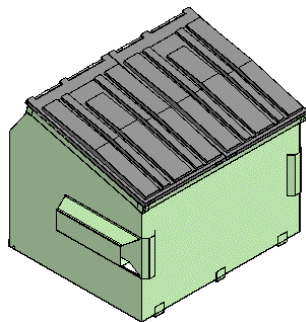
The 2004 reports indicate that 82 municipalities and regions, which are made up of 165 municipalities, have mandatory recycling ordinances.





## Musing of a Dumpster

I didn't think that I was hurting anyone. As a matter of fact, I really never did much of anything – or so I thought. Suddenly, I got wind of there being a lot of displeasure in my just being here though. So what's the problem? The problem, I guess, is in who I am – a dumpster!



In an unassuming corner of a parking lot in a downtown block, I took up residence a few years ago. My assignment was to accept the waste of a couple of little shops that backed up to me. It all seemed pretty easy and the kind of assignment that would be envied by my counterparts everywhere. A few times a day, I would yawn as the lid was thrown open and I would swallow up a few trash bags and maybe some cardboard boxes.



Once a week this big front-end loader truck would tickle me under my wings, and I would be lifted up and over the truck cab to cough up my prized possessions. After being burped with a

sudden shake of the hydraulics, I would be set down for another week of just being me.

I guess I noticed the change when management in one shop changed hands. The new people seemed to know that cardboard really was a valuable commodity. They instructed their people to break down the boxes and pile them separately next to me. That was all fine with me, as I never really did care for the sharp corners or empty containers making me look – well, gluttonous. The trash bags, I noticed were different as well. As a matter of fact the neighborhood took on a whole new look. A few totter carts took up position next to me. They turned out to be quite snobbish as they opened only to – well one was paper and goodness only knows what went into the others – but I do know that they didn't mix well. Just when I had warmed up to the cardboard leaning against me, wouldn't you know it, they found room for another large container that had this thing for keeping cardboard clean and dry.

I guess this is what would be referred to as neighborhood sprawl? As I saw it though, it was kind of strange. Everyone driving by seemed to like our appearance. As a matter of fact, I thought that we kind of went together quite nicely myself. Then I guess it was the fact that we were more noticeable that we got much more popular. Actually, I was the one that got the most of the attention. There were times when I could hardly keep my trap shut. It was obvious that I was handy, and I had become a little too easy. I realized that I wasn't really a part of the neighborhood any longer. I was being used by those that didn't want to own up to their own waste. I was the one gaining the bad reputation. That's when I got the padlock put on me.

As my neighbors did their part, I had continued to do mine. The visit of trucks came less often and at different times. The contents of my trash bags were changing too. The problems came from those that didn't know about recycling or didn't care. Often I could tell that I was being visited by strangers just passing through. I was given the black mark. Trash was piled on me and not placed in me. I was being used but not used properly. My appearance changed dramatically too. People looked at me in a different light.

I thought that surely I would be rediscovered. If people were taught the right way to treat me – much like my shop keepers, the neighborhood would return to a place of importance. Before I knew what happened though, I discovered that they had another answer for taking care of me. A fence arose around me, and I was locked away from the world. It wasn't for anything that I did but rather for what had been done to me. Why? I guess for just being me - dumpster!

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Over the last year, discussions with those traveling about the State have noted the recent appearance of dumpsters in all sizes, shapes, and locations – even the front dooryard. “Musings of a Dumpster” reinforces the thought of discussing the obvious in support of Recycling. We know that children like stories, and generally it is easier to jump into their creative minds than to force an adult view on them too soon. Having read the short story, how many lessons can be discussed with and about the dumpster: safety, such as, don't play around the dumpster; separating materials for recycling; civic responsibility - use by others; ease of disposal versus the effort to recycle; and more.

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**Electronic copies can save resources (money, time, and materials).**

### Maine Recycling Calendar, 2006

Featuring Artwork from the "Maine Recycles Week 2005" Poster Contest



## Mark Your Calendar !

### MRRA Winter Workshop

Monday, January 30th, 2006,

Hilton Hotel, Auburn, ME

(Snow Date: Tuesday, Jan. 31st)

### 13th Annual Maine Recycling & Solid Waste Conference

Monday & Tuesday, April 24-25, 2006, Samoset Resort, Rockport, ME

For sponsorship or exhibitor information contact John Albertini, 207-942-6772 or email [mr.ra.john@verizon.net](mailto:mr.ra.john@verizon.net)

### NRRA (Northeast Resource Recovery Assn.) Conference

June 5-6, 2006, Nashua, NH [www.recyclewithus.org](http://www.recyclewithus.org)